

## AMENDMENTS

Please amend the application as indicated hereafter.

### In the Claims

Please substitute the following ~~clean~~ copy text for the pending claims of the same number, and cancel ~~claim 19~~ without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer.

*A1  
S15  
D1*

1. (Once Amended) An integrated circuit comprising:  
a first port for outputting a signal;  
a second port for receiving said signal;  
a common area comprising an alignment link for electrically connecting said first port with said second port;  
said first port extends directly into said common area from a first area;  
said second port extends directly into said common area from a second area;  
and  
said alignment link comprises a signal buffer for buffering a signal traveling along said alignment link between said first port and said second port.

*A2  
S15*

17. (Once Amended) An integrated circuit comprising:  
a first port for outputting a signal;  
a second port for receiving said signal;  
a common area comprising an alignment means for electrically connecting said first port with said second port;  
said first port extends directly into said common area from a first area; and  
said second port extends directly into said common area from a second area.